acres of land and Rupees one crore to the Centre under an agreement to construct a Software Technology Park in the State;

(b) if so, the progress made so far in this scheme; and

(c) whether the State Government has recently approached Centre in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) an autonomous society under the Ministry of Communications and IT has set up a small office with 1000 Sq. ft. of built up space in Biscomaun Bhavan, Patna. The Office is fully functional and providing statutory services under the STP Scheme, datacom services to the customers and small incubation facility for SMEs. for constructing the STPI building in the space provided by Government of Bihar, Architecture-cum-Project Management works have been awarded and construction agencies have been shortlisted. Government of Bihar has requested for the early construction of the proposed building.

Telephone connectivity in villages of H.P.

2736. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the telecom density in the rural areas in the country with particular reference to the hilly areas like Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) whether there is any proposal to connect more villages and provide telecom facilities to every village in Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The requisite information is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) As per the agreement signed under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in November, 2004, BSNL will provide Village Public Telephones (VPTs) facility to 1002 accessible, undisputed and undisturbed

villages of Himachal Pradesh with a population of more than hundred as per 1991 Census. A total of 503 villages have been covered as on 31.03.2006 and the balance 499 will also be covered progressively by November, 2007 as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Statement

State-wise rural teledensity (As on 31.03.2006*)*

Sl. No.	Name of State/Circle	Teledensity
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	8.80
2.	Andhra Pradesh	2.34
3.	Assam	0.73
4.	Bihar	0.66
5.	Chhattisgarh	0.51
6.	Gujarat	2.69
7.	Haryana	3.10
8.	Himachal Pradesh	7.25
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	0.85
10.	Jharkhand	0.58
11.	Karnataka	2.63
12.	Kerala	10.65
13.	Madhya Pradesh	0.79
14.	Maharashtra (-) Mumbai	2.80
15.	North-East-I	1.29
16.	North East-II	1.26
17.	Orissa	1.16
18.	Punjab	5.29
19.	Rajasthan	1.67
20.	Tamil Nadu(-) Chennai	2.99
21.	Uttaranchal	1.84
22.	Uttar Pradesh	0.55
23.	West Bengal (-) Kolkata	1.13
24.	Kolkata	0.00
25.	Chennai	0.00
26	Delhi	0.00
27.	Mumbai	0.00
	All India	1.86